# BEMUSING MAGAZINE

# COMIC NEWS

ALL THE LATEST COMICS NEWS, REVIEWS, AND COMMENT!

10p
US: 35c

NOVEMBER
11


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HUNTED BY THE LAW! HATED BY THE UNDERWORLD!
FREEDOM FIGHTERS
WELCOME TO THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE WORLD!
BECAUSE IF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS DON'T DEFEAT THIS DEMON— THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING!
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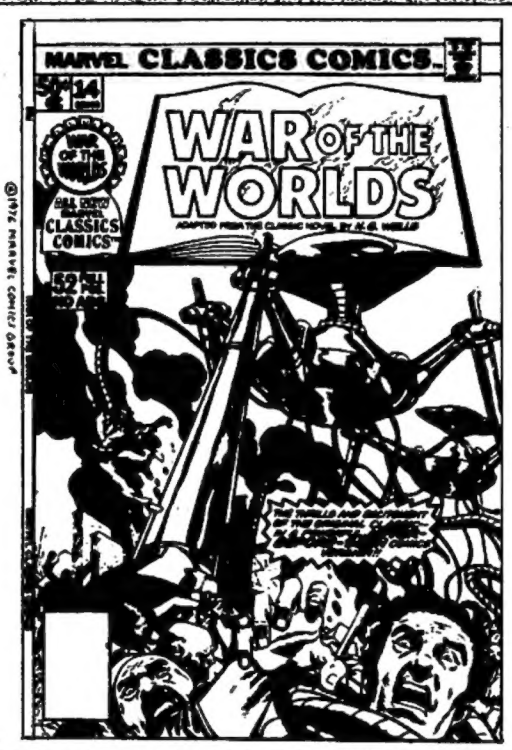

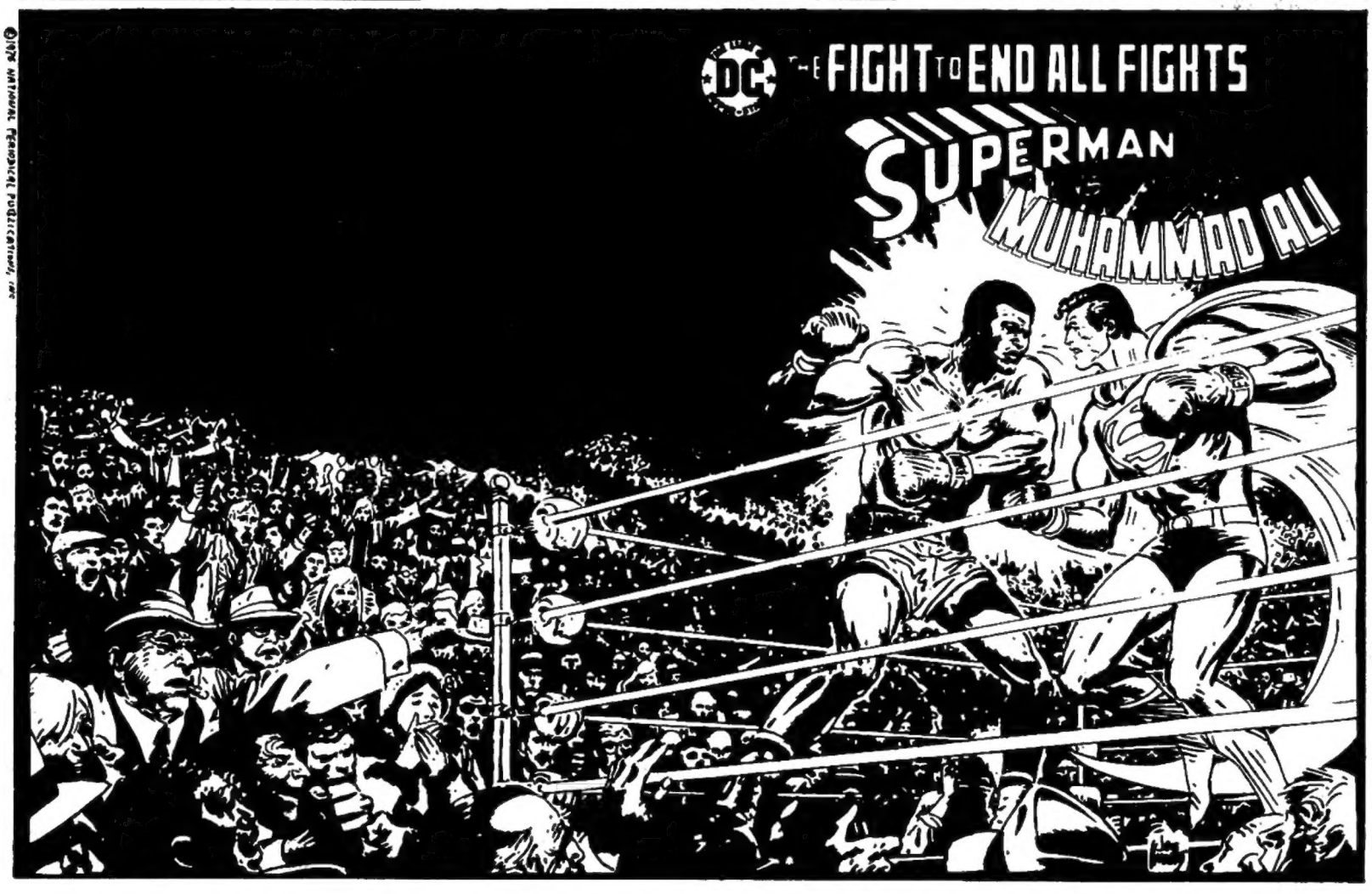

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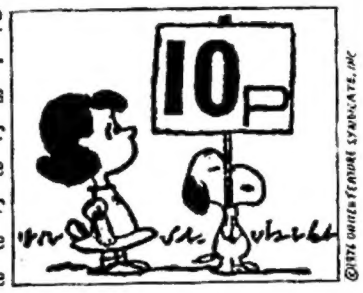
# BEMUSING MAGAZINE ≠11

NOVEMBER 1976

editor & publisher: Martin Lock

assistant editor: Nigel Edwards

Some issues are easier to put together than others --to be on the safe side, I had arranged for two 2-page articles, one for this issue and the other to be held over for Bem-12--and NEITHER of them has come in in time! The Superswipe Revenge Squad has now been despatched, so that they both ought to arrive in good time for next issue! However, as promised we have an extra-large news section, more space for most of the regular Bem features -- and Hunter Tremayne has given us a sequel to his Conan appreciation in Bem-8, with Red Sonja in the spotlight. So, while this issue may not be exactly what was planned--here it is!

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As mentioned last time, Bem-12 will have a cover-price of 15p--by post it will cost 20p. There is still time to subscribe at 70p for 5 issues--but, on January 1st, the rate goes up to £1.00! One of our characters may be against the move --but what do beagles know? More money means more pages, which means more features and articles -- in fact, PROGRESS! There will still be no fanzine offering better value.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN ≠1 (week ending Oct 13th) is now on sale, with the 7-page first instalment of the origin of the good captain, in colour, along with a 5-page Steranko SHIELD reprint and a Cap B pin-up (originally designed as the story's splash page) also in colour, and ten pages of reprinted Fantastic Four. This is the first Marvel hero to premiere outside the USA -- and, for the fan who already has the reprints, probably the most expensive; 7 pages for 10p works out the same as 24p for a standard 17-page comic story, or over 40 cents! However, the team of Chris Claremont and Herb Trimpe, assisted by inker Fred Kida, colourist Marie Severin, letterer Irv Watanabe, and editor (and cover artist) Larry Lieber, are capable of work worth, in theory, "import prices"!

The story starts promisingly enough, with Captain Britain battling a horde of armoured baddies--and then we go into flash-back, with the nuclear complex at Darkmoor Research Centre under attack, and one of the scientists, Brian Braddock, escaping, only to crash. Broken and dying, he sees two figures in the sky, who offer a choice...the amulet or the sword...

I'll be following this book--it could be good! -ML

ART CREDITS Harry McAvinchey: 12 Al Matheson: 16 Ray Aspden: 18 Mercy Van Vlack: 14 Laurence Piper: 2 Greg Chown: 4 Christophe Ta-Min: 2 Joe Matthews: 13 Al Walker: 17 Philip Elliott: 19 Superswipe: 20

# news

Two new books to be scripted by Marv Wolfman are MIDAS, THE MILLION DOLLAR MOUSE and SUPER RABBIT, THE MARVEL BUNNY -- the artists are Sam Grainger & John Costanza, respectively. These are ordinary "funny animal" type books, not like Howard.

Stan Lee returns to writing SPIDER-MAN, with John Romita on art! Not the comic-book, though, but a new syndicated comic strip --dailies and Sundays. Other strips the Lee name will appear on are a soap opera called "The Virtue Of Vera Valiant" and a photo funnies concoction of the "Monster Madness" type.

Rudy Nebres is now the regular artist on DR STRANGE, with the covers done by Frank Brunner-- Mike Ploog may do a fill-in. Marv Wolfman takes over TWO-IN-ONE with ≠25 (Thing + Iron Fist) and promises he'll bring back Wundarr. SPIDER-WOMAN will be debuting in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT ≠32, from Archie Goodwin & Sal Buscema, who should know better!

Gerry Conway has left Marvel. With Steve Gerber concentrating solely on HOWARD THE DUCK, this leaves Marvel very short of scripters, and means that the whole system of editors will also need changing. Jim Shooter will take over AVENGERS, while Archie Goodwin is set to take charge of PETER PARKER -- Chris Claremont will be leaving the CAPTAIN BRITAIN strip, which is to be inherited by none other than Gary Friedrich, to take over some other Conway books.

TARZAN will now be published by Marvel, after protracted negotiations by Stan Lee; Roy Thomas will take charge of the immortal apeman, keeping of his other projects only CONAN and THE INVADERS, while the major artist will be John Buscema--as the contract calls for Marvel to produce, mainly for Europe, 120 pages of art per month, he can't do it all. A second ERB book from Marvel will feature JOHN CARTER OF MARS, probably to be handled by Dave Cockrum & Alex Nino. As existing Marvel artists will be stretched by all this extra work, it's lucky that they've acquired the services of Ernie Chua, or, now that he has become a US citizen, Ernie CHAN. But they've also lost Bob Brown to DC...

Even before its launch, Marvel have proudly announced that "the British have welcomed CAPTAIN BRITAIN with enough enthusiasm for Marvel to begin working on another title for Britain!" The Captain's American debut will be as guest in MARVEL TEAM-UP ≠56, or thereabouts.

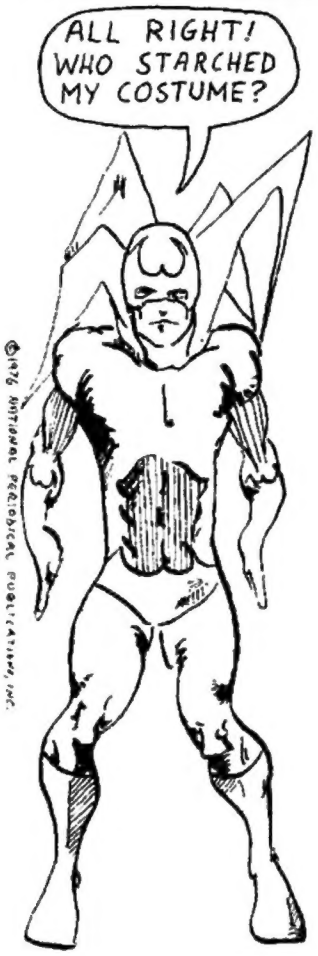
Marvel will be issuing a wide range of annuals again in 1977 --the 5-page stories they have been preparing will probably end up in the back of 'em. The newest 5-pagers announced are of CLEA (Naomi Basner, Sandy Plunkett, & Tony Salmon), THE DESTROYER (Scott Edelman & Mike Zeck) and SPIDER-MAN (Edelman & John Romita JUNIOR).

Future issues of WHAT IF are to feature (≠3) Captain America & Bucky if that bomb at the end of the war hadn't exploded, (≠4) Conan transported to 1977, (≠5) the Thomas-Adams version of the X-Men, and (≠6) the Fantastic Four with different powers.

THE PRISONER is scrapped--no issues will appear, as Kirby's work was not up to the Marvel standard.

With Gerber now only writing Howard, GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY goes to Jim Shooter, and OMEGA to Mary Skrenes alone. Gil Kane is drawing a Conan story for SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN.

# PAGE 4 FUNNIES



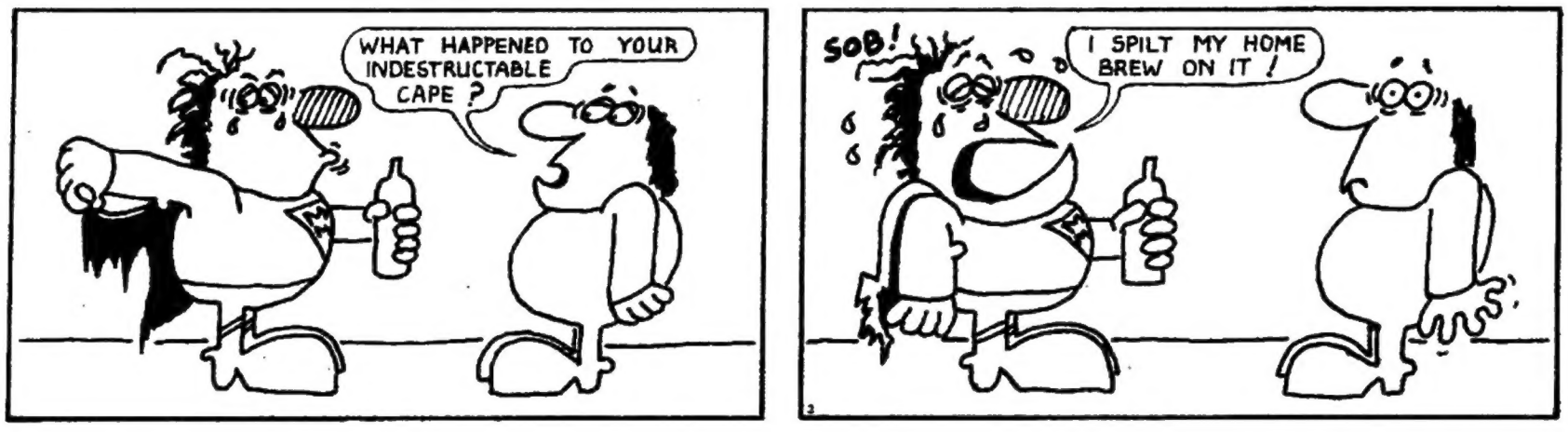

CHRIS ASH PRESENTS:

**NOW, FOLLOWING THE SMASH SUCCESS OF SUPERMAN/SPIDERMAN COMES**

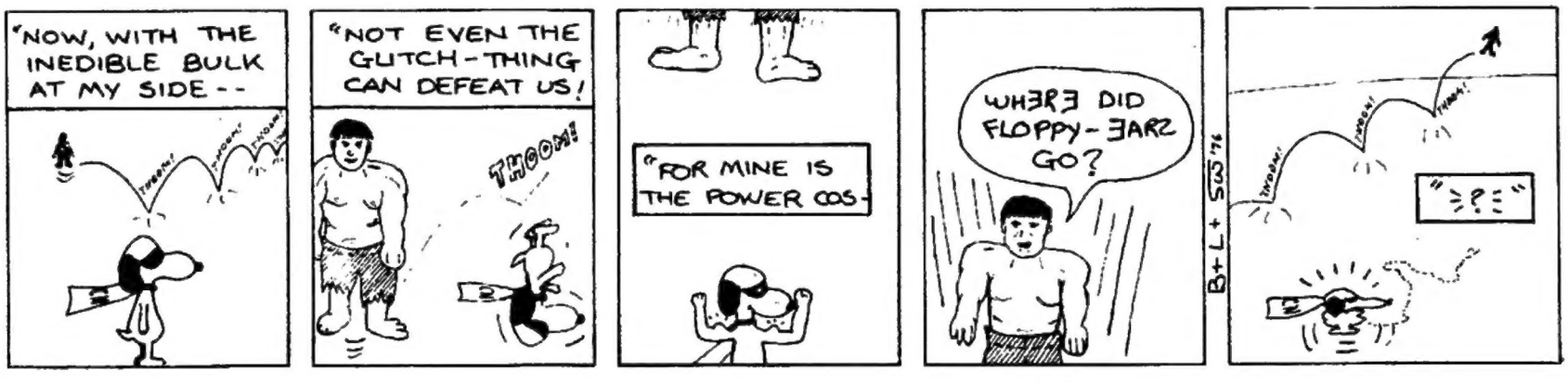
# BATMAN MEETS THOR!

...SAID CHUCKLE "WHO'S THE FASTEST DRAW IN THE HEH, HEH WEST?"..
CHEERS BAT-MAN
UH?...OH-CHEERS THOR!
...AND... THE IRISHMAN SAID.... MURPHY ANDERSON!
ANYWAY— I'M UNDER-AGE. WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?
BATMAN AND THOR ©1976 NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS/THOR ©1976 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

MIGHTY MAN — BY L. STANNAGE




CAPTAIN NUTS — by B.L. Schwipe



# news

Gerry Conway has joined DC. This time, he is not to be made an editor, but only a scripter --he is to create 8 new titles for them. Steve Englehart has been reassured that he will be continuing as the regular JLA writer (he starts with ≠139)-- Conway won't be able to grab it!

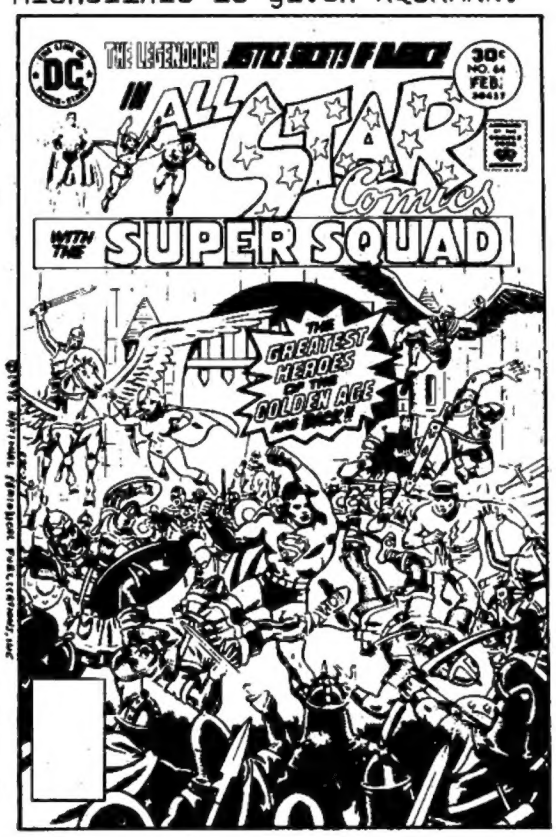
DC's new format is to be 80 pages (66 of story) for $1.00; four books go to this size, and each will feature all new story and art. G I COMBAT will have two Haunted Tank tales, plus other war tales; WORLD'S FINEST will star the usual Superman & Batman team-up (by Haney, Swan, and, since he enjoyed inking the new Superboy story so much, Murphy Anderson), plus Wonder Woman (by O'Neil, José Delbo, & Colletta), Black Canary (Jack Harris, Mike Nasser, and Terry Austin), Green Arrow (by Tony Isabella, Grell & Austin), and Vigilante (by Bill Kunkel and John Calnan). The material that was prepared for the GA/Black Canary book will be used here. HOUSE OF MYSTERY will be using Aragones gag pages and some new Wrightson covers, plus lots of inventory mystery stuff, while SUPERMAN FAMILY adds Superbaby (Bridwell, Calnan & Bob Smith) and "World of Krypton" to its existing features.

With Chua leaving, Mike Grell takes over Batman, inked by Bob Wiacek; the replacement art team on SUPERBOY/LSH are to be Jim Sherman and Jack Abel. Also on Batman is new artist (from the Philippines) Romeo Tanghal.

DC SPECIAL loses THE THREE MUSKETEERS after ≠25; issue 26 is full of ENEMY ACE reprints, while ≠27 stars CAPTAIN COMET & TOMMY TOMORROW versus Chronos, by Bob Rozakis & Rich Buckler. Dinosaurs, the Teen Titans, and inker Joe Rubinstein are also involved. SUPER-TEAM FAMILY is returning to its original team-up concept, starting with Flash, Supergirl, and the Atom.

JONAH HEX will start with ≠1; WEIRD WESTERN will continue with a new hero, created by Sergio Aragones & Joe Orlando, who were also behind BAT LASH.

BLACK LIGHTNING ≠1 will bear an April cover-date. DETECTIVE is relapsing to bi-monthly, and GHOSTS, WEIRD WAR, & WITCHING HOUR are promoted to 8 a year. Cary Bates takes over writing HERCULES UNBOUND, while David Michelinie is given AQUAMAN.



Joe Staton is now working for DC exclusively, and will be the regular METAL MEN artist -- ≠50 will have to be reprint, though. He may fill in for Wally Wood on ALL STAR for an issue or two too. Bob Brown is assigned to BATMAN FAMILY and TEEN TITANS, while Al Milgrom has inked a WORLD'S FINEST over Curt Swan's pencils. Dick Ayers & Jack Abel take over FREEDOM FIGHTERS with ≠7, while Ramona Fradon and Bob Smith move on to SUPER FRIENDS from ≠3. Rich Buckler and Bob Layton are the artists on SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS. Jack Sparling has left DC -- UNKNOWN SOLDIER will be drawn by Ayers & Talaoc, WELCOME BACK KOTTER by Estrada & Oksner.

Steve Englehart has written a fill-in for KAMANDI, scheduled as ≠51; Gray Morrow has drawn the cover for DC SUPERSTARS OF MAGIC (≠11), while Nick Cardy, Russ Heath, and Jim Steranko may also be doing covers for DC.

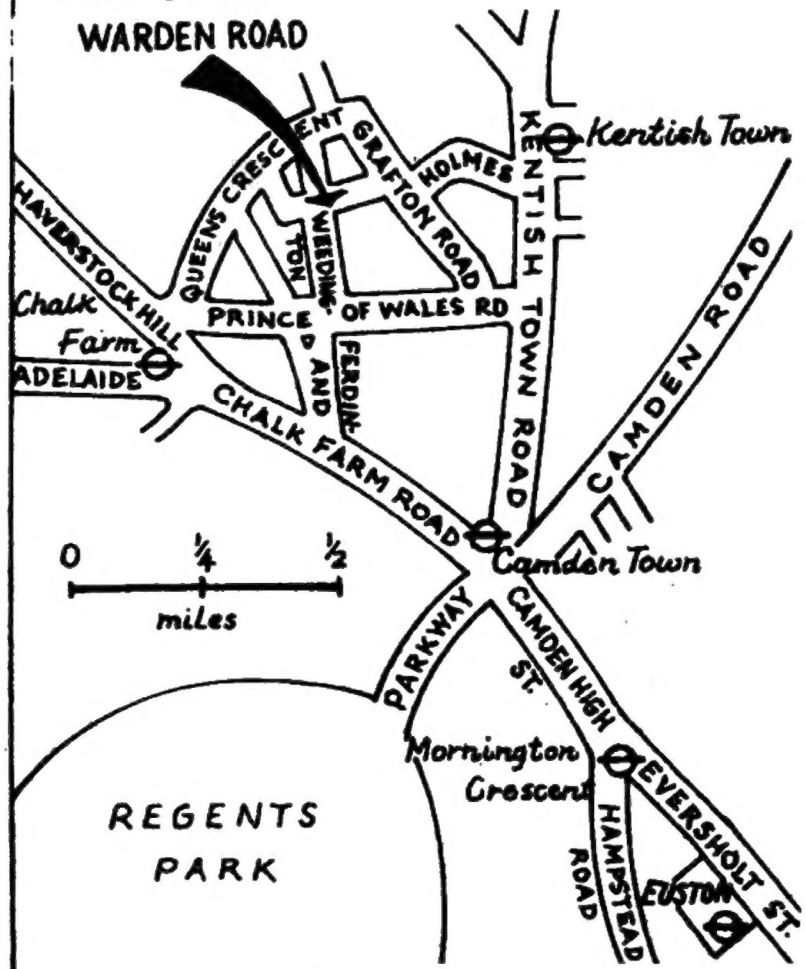
Denny O'Neil? He's revamping ISIS, giving her a secret hide-out in a pyramid, and SUPERMAN FAMILY, adding gag pages. He's now story editor of FREEDOM FIGHTERS, has stopped writing KAMANDI, and, along with Neal Adams, is deeply involved in the SUPERMAN-MUHAMMAD ALI book.

Elliot Maggin has left DC.

# ROB BARROW'S
# COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE

## Free *Lyndhurst Hall, Warden Road, Kentish Town, London, N.W.3.* Nov 13th

This mart will be a unique avent in British comic fandom, Fantasy Domain have hired all the available tables to clear their vast overstock of comicbooks and related items. So if you want and Marvel colour or weekly comics, Marvel B & W magazines, D.C. Comics, Warrens, Charltons, etc, come along on November 13th, many of the comics will be at special sale prices.



HOW TO GET THERE:
Undergound to Chalk Farm, Camden Town, or Kentish Town.
Bus numbers 27, 134, 137, 214 to Kentish Town.
Bus numbers 3, 31, 53, 68, 74, 27, 29, 253 to Camden Town or Chalk Farm.

DEALERS: Tables for this mart are now sold out. Book now for these regional Comic Marts listed below.

BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham Centre Hotel, New Street. January 22nd.

HULL: Hull Centre Hotel, Paragon Street. February 26th.

BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham Centre Hotel, New Street. April 23rd.

Dealers tables are £3.00 each, all tables must be booked in advance, no tables will be available on the day. Payment, accompanied by an S.A.E., should be sent to:

FANTASY DOMAIN,
212 Grange Road,
Plaistow,
London E.13 OHB.

All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Fantasy Domain.



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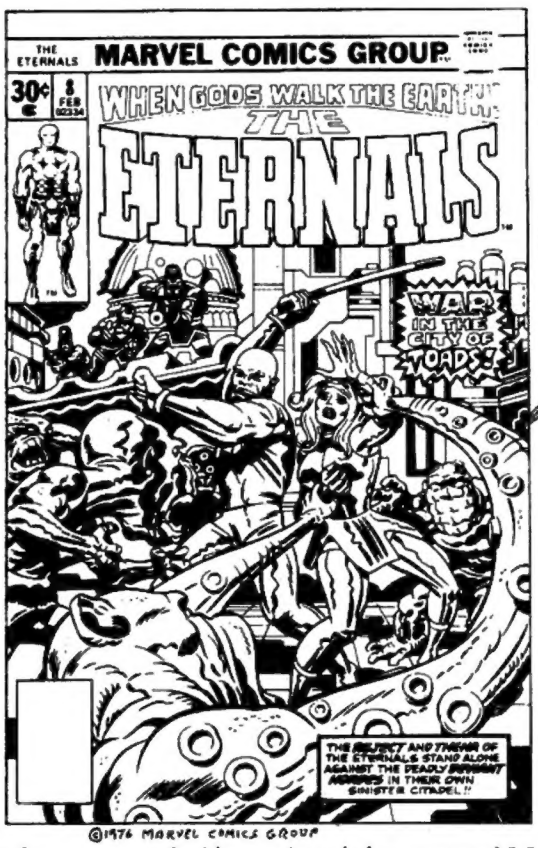
# REG USPATOFF

So, after 30 years, a comics company is going out of business. This isn't like "Atlas", which came and went within a year--I'm talking about Charlton, the firm who brought us Captain Atom and the Blue Beetle by Ditko, E-Man, Doomsday + 1, the Phantom by Jim Aparo and, more recently, Don Newton, Flash Gordon, and SPACE: 1999 in colour and black & white by such people as John Byrne and Morrow. Now Charlton have laid off all their comics people, and are only publishing their rock music, puzzles, karate & similar magazines.


THE ETERNALS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
30¢
WHEN GODS WALK THE EARTH!
THE ETERNALS
WAR IN THE CITY OF TOADS!
THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST OF THE ETERNALS STAND ALONE AGAINST THE DEADLY DEVIANT HORDES IN THEIR OWN SINISTER CITADEL!
©1976 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

The shock would have been much greater a year ago, but since then such bright spots on the schedules as E-Man and Doomsday + 1 have been scrapped, both Joe Staton and John Byrne have gone on to the "big two" comics companies...and the Phantom was being cancelled (now it's not sure if the announced final issue, #74, will appear or not) anyway, while Continuity Associates were leaving the black and white line after a dispute over the return of original artwork. Only weeks before the final crunch, in fact, Charlton announced that it was cutting its output by half, cancelling 14 existing and 4 new unpublished titles, and cutting some other books back to quarterly--so the final closure is only the last step in a downward path. Thanks for some good times, Charlton...

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While Warren are not in any similar danger, and will no doubt continue just as long as James Warren wishes to be a comics publisher, the putting-back of the Spirit TV movie has led to a cut-back to a 2-a-year schedule for the SPIRIT book. They are running short of good material...

The departure of Gerry Conway from the Marvel bullpen has not caused gloom and despondency in the hearts of every Marvel man; in fact, the way he had acted, grabbing those books he wanted from the writers in residence, and the quality of some of his new scripts and creations, means that Marvel are going to manage without any great difficulty. It is, of course, unfortunate that it happens to coincide with the added work-load from the Tarzan contract; if you know any good writers, send them along!

National--I beg their pardon, the name now is "DC Comics Inc" --have released more details of the "SUPERMAN vs MUHAMMAD ALI" book. Joe Kubert is involved, and has drawn the cover, but it seems that he is no longer the book's penciller--that job has been passed on to Neal Adams and his friends at Continuity. Denny O'Neil is the scripter, and the story currently involves a powerful race of alien warriors, who wish to conquer the Earth. They tell Earth to pick somebody to face their own champion, in a fight to decide the fate of the world; being no fools, we pick Superman! But the aliens aren't stupid either, they pick a fight arena under a red sun, so Supes has to be given boxing training by Ali. And once he gets into the act, he keeps popping up throughout the rest of the story. But all this could yet be changed.

Will the new 80-page, $1.00 format work for DC? To me it seems unlikely. The words "all new" on the cover won't mean much to most comics buyers, and the choice of books to convert is very timid. An expanded 50-cent line, like JLA, is surely more viable. -RU

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# Yancy Street Journal.

**WHAT A REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT!**

LATEST NEWS FROM AMERICA

**IT'S CLOBBERING TIME!**

REVIEWS SECTION

**THE POWER OF 'EMLOCK!'**

FANDOM'S MOST PROLIFIC REVIEWER STRIKES AGAIN

**SHALL WE JOIN THE LADIES?**

THE 1st IN A SERIES OF HEROINE MINI ARTICLES

**LETS HEAR IT FOR THE WALKING DEAD!**

MARVELS GOLDEN AGE REVISITED

**BLADE OF BOUDICCA SUNBURST TIMESEND**

ALL NEW COMIC STRIP ADVENTURES

**PLUS FIRST EVER FULL COLOUR COVER ON A BRITISH FANZINE**

Send for 1st Issue (40p) and Subscription Details to:—
Howard Stangroom

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# FANTHINGS

For a chap whose idea of sartorial elegance is wearing a bow-tie with a T-shirt, GLIMPSE ≠4's editor, Paul Hudson, sure knows how to put together a good magazine; for 40p by post you get two excellent SF stories, the 6-page origin of Neutron (strip) by Guy Lawley, Andy Darlington on the fiction of Bob Shaw, and a meaty review section including features on new films, Kirby's 2001, Moorcock, and some nicely done fan art. While it isn't the best-produced issue Paul & Guy have put out (who forgot to put a "continued on page 40" tag on the foot of page 6? I was starting to think that they were starting a new fashion by ending stories in mid-sentence!), it's still an excellent SF & comics fanzine--and, sadly, the final issue. (From Paul Hudson,

with a nice 3-colour Hunter cover.)

I didn't hold out very high hopes for issue 4 of THE ADVENTURESS (available to subscribers to the Comics Heroines Fan Club at ₲1.20, the same as The Heroine Addict -- send £2 or so to Martin Lock, and at current exchange rates you'll get ₲3.40 worth of zines as they come out), the fan fiction companion zine to "The Heroine Addict"--but it's the best issue yet, despite the absense of two of the most liked series. "Skull Goddess" is the only wholly text tale, and is intriguing, if too short; among the strips, "Raven" comes good, while Bob Rodi's "Stella", using the Gerber trick of putting text in the middle of the strip, I found delightful. Mercy Van Vlack contributes a strip starring the CHFC's mascot, CHeFaC which I also enjoyed a lot -- the only dud is "Innana", which was confusing and boring, but redeemed in places by pretty good art. If you send our own Maniacal Martin £2.12, carefully explaining it's for the CHFC and not the "make Emlock embarassingly affluent" fund, you'll tend to get one TA and two THAs, since the TA schedule isn't quite as regular as THA's...I can now recommend both zines.

COMIXINE ≠2 was out in time for Comicon '76 (were YOU there?), with 20 all-litho pages for 15p by post 20p, from Marc Baines,

plus,

a free gift of the far-out first issue of THE INCREDIBLE GARBAGE, the only zine to have Stan Lee's head in the logo (I hope)! That's sneaky Superswipe at work, needless to say! Artists more worthy of note are Stannage, Selemba (a most striking illo for Nige Edwards' interview with Killraven), and Al Walker, an artist who is improving nicely. Strips are provided by Al, Nige (drawn by Paul Armistead), Gary Selemba, and Lepros "Jolly" Kretin, and there's lots more good stuff too! Staying with the Counter-Earth crew (what does Kathleen Glancy think of that name, I wonder?), Mark Bilsborough brings us the first all-litho issue (≠4) of CROM (25p by post from him,

this zine is now a "must" for all sword 'n' sorcery fans, rich in fiction, fan art, and features. Emlock sounds off about the customs-seized Savage Sword; Edwoods unearths a Tarzan story by Neal Adams; Andy Darlington contributes a substantial saga of soaring cities and spoilt civilisations; and more! Selemba & Stannage contribute some good art, too.

DELAPSUS RESURGAM ≠1 19p from Star Magazines c/o Paul Chester,

is quite a mixture, with comics & fanzine reviews, articles on Star*Reach and British Marvel, art by Phil Elliott and (oh, come ON!) "Kung-Fu Vampire" by John Matthews. First issues should be cherished & encouraged, and there's a promising team of young fans at work here; with proper encouragement, DR could be a welcome addition to the regular fanzines.

FANTASY ADVERTISER ≠60 40p from Colin Campbell,

is a first issue too, at least as far as new editor Colin is concerned--6 pages of Alan Booth & Angus McKie's "Swordspell", an interview with Neal Adams reprinted from an American zine, 7 pages of Dez Skinn's ads, a nice cover by Bob Wakelin, 16 pages of assorted ads -- what more should we ask for? It'll take Colin an issue or two to give F/A an editorial personality, but he's the chap for the job; I just hope he gets "Battlefield" going himself, and doesn't rely on ex-editor Dez to do it for him. Colin <u>will</u> publish F/A on schedule; that's the main thing.

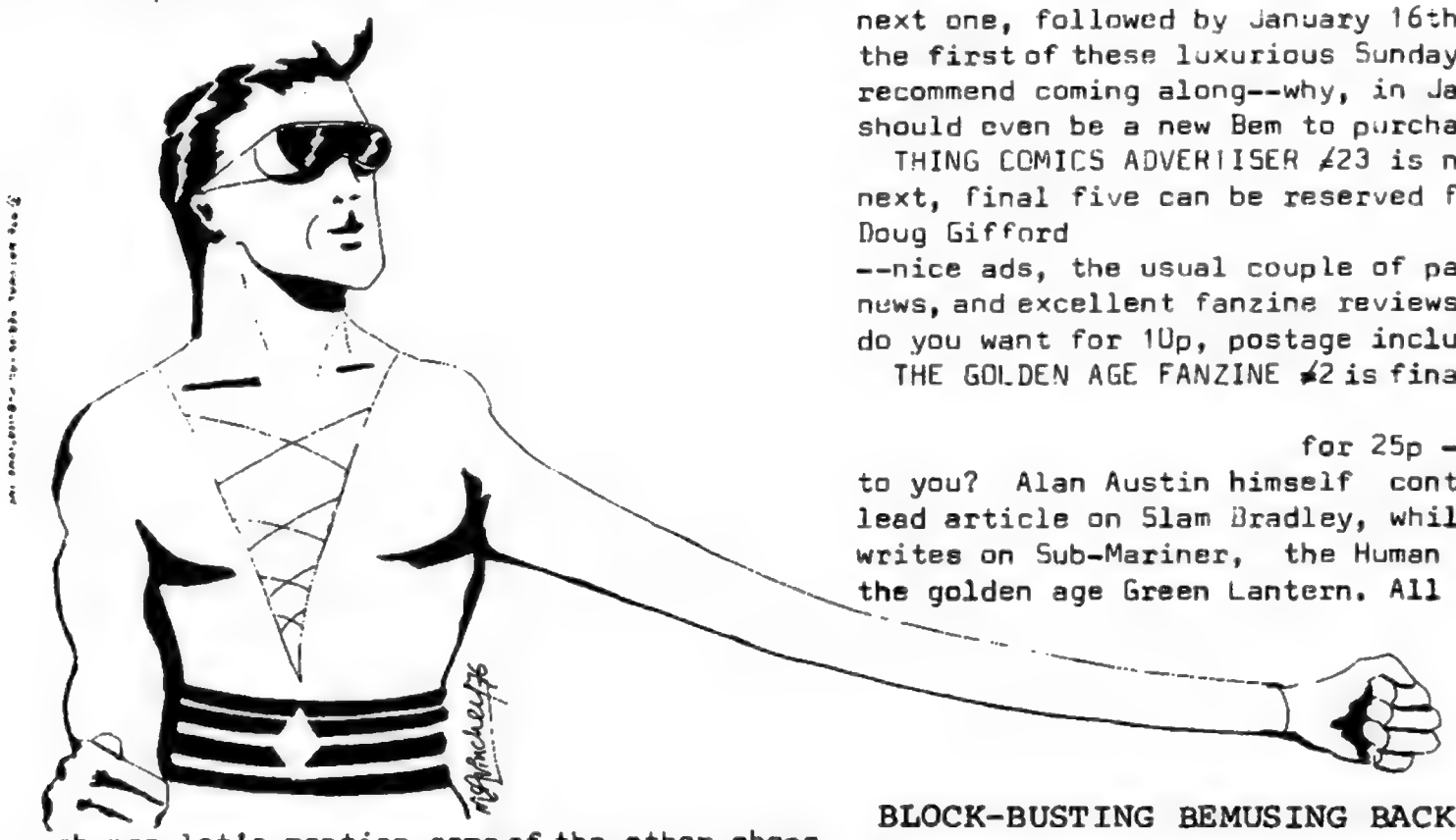
PANELOLOGIST ≠6 has a price-hike; it's now 20p an issue by post, from George Barnett.

Still 16 big pages--but, by using tiny type on 8 pages--ooh, my aching eyes!--manage to cram a lot more opinion, articles and reviews in. And Chris Ash contributes <u>two</u> of his highly hilarious strips--they alone must be worth 20p!

continued on page 12...

MOTHER OF MITRA! WHAT DEVILRY IS THIS? TELL ME STREET MERCHANT... WHAT HAS BECOME OF "DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN-EYED"?
DON'T THEY KNOW IT'S MOVED TO: 9-12 ST. ANNE'S COURT, (OFF WARDOUR ST.) LONDON W1. (PHONE: 01-734-4260 AS BEFORE)
BRIAN·BOLLAND
HULK
AND NOW THEY REALLY HAVE GOT THE LARGEST SELECTION OF S.F. IN THE WORLD, THE LARGEST POSTER GALLERY IN ENGLAND... AND ROOM TO BROWSE (AND BREATHE) IN A SEPARATE COMIC SECTION WITH 50,000 BACK ISSUES!

I've dealt with London comic shops quite a lot in recent columns--carefully not mentioning "El Creepo" and his lawsuits--so this time, for



a change let's mention some of the other shops worth visiting. Nige Edwards swears by BOGUS, of 21 Princes Avenue, Hull; Bristolians would be lost without THE FOREVER PEOPLE, at 11, The Promenade, Bristol; and I gather that all the necessities of fannish life can also be bought from the EASY READER BOOKSHOP, 32, Moorfields, Liverpool L2 2BS. Since I got the addresses from Martin's mailing list, I gather you can also pick up copies of Bemusing there too! By the way, since short of hitching all around the country, I can't get to the out-of-London shops, I'd be grateful if Bem readers would let me know what specialist comics shops there are around in their areas; drop me a note, via Martin, okay?

For cyborg fans, Kevin O'Neill brings us MEK MEMOIRS #1

at 16p . After unhappy experiences with a couple of publishers, Kev's going it alone--an interesting tale of robot war-machines, but I wish he'd buy a stapler! Borrow? Rent?

But, on to the magazine advertised on page 8; YANCY STREET JOURNAL #1. The subscription rate is £1.00 for 3 issues, and that would be a good way of investing a pound--this is the best new zine around, and can only be compared with TBS and Comic Media. A full-colour cover, 32 slick pages, typeset throughout; articles by editor Howard Stangroom, Rich Morrissey, Keith "K" Williams, and cover artist Steve Lowther; news and Emlock columns; and five strips, all well done and all different. If it can keep to its bimonthly schedule, it's going to be the top UK articles/strips fanzine, bar none!

Let's see; about the only marts without an ad in Bem this time are the London ones, at the Regent Centre Hotel--November 28th is the next one, followed by January 16th. Going by the first of these luxurious Sunday Marts, I'd recommend coming along--why, in January there should even be a new Bem to purchase!

THING COMICS ADVERTISER #23 is now out--the next, final five can be reserved for 50p from Doug Gifford

--nice ads, the usual couple of paragraphs of news, and excellent fanzine reviews. What else do you want for 10p, postage included?

THE GOLDEN AGE FANZINE #2 is finally on sale for 25p --would I lie to you? Alan Austin himself contributes the lead article on Slam Bradley, while Mike Hill writes on Sub-Mariner, the Human Torch, and the golden age Green Lantern. All good stuff!

-Ed Sallis

## BLOCK-BUSTING BEMUSING BACK ISSUES!

Bem-1 - 12 pages for 8p. Collector's Edition --tale-enders, pricing, E-Man #1 reviewed.
Summer Comics Special - 4 pages for 8p. News, art by Chown & Superswipe, reviews.
Bem-3 - 12 pages for 10p. "Manhunter" 2-page article, "Bullpun Bulletins"; Paul Rose art.
N-Zine #1 - 16 pages for 11p. Comic strip by Ken Cropper, news, reviews, Edwoods, etc!
Bem-5 - 16 pages for 14p. "Fatlas Comics" by Pete April, Jack Straw, & Superswipe, etc.
Bem-6 - 20 pages for 14p. The coming of Capt. Nuts, Reg Uspatoff, Ed Sallis, Supes and all!
Bem-7 - 16 + 8 pages for 14p. Contains the wild WEIRD TRASH "Bamboozling" take-off!
Bem-8 - 20 pages for 14p. "Those Were The Days, by Crom!" by Hunter Tremayne, etc.
Bem-9 - 40 pages for 28p. Special Heroine Double Issue, by top USA and UK fans.
Bem-10 - 20 pages for 14p. "The Bem Story--So Far" by Jim Korock, plus lots more stuff...

THE TEN--80p THE LAST FIVE--56p

I wonder, is the above a back issue ad, or is it a cleverly disguised history of Bem? Don't forget that <u>now</u> is the last time that you can subscribe to Bem, or renew your subscription, at the old rate of 70 pence for 5 issues. Look for the return of the Highgate Six, Howard the Duck interviewed by Nige Edwards, The Invaders examined by Rich Morrissey, a second Heroine special issue, and more, not to mention the latest comics news and distribution data, fan art, reviews and comment... it will all come along in future issues of BEMUSING MAGAZINE!

# REACTION

Send your letters to: Martin Lock

Dear Martin,

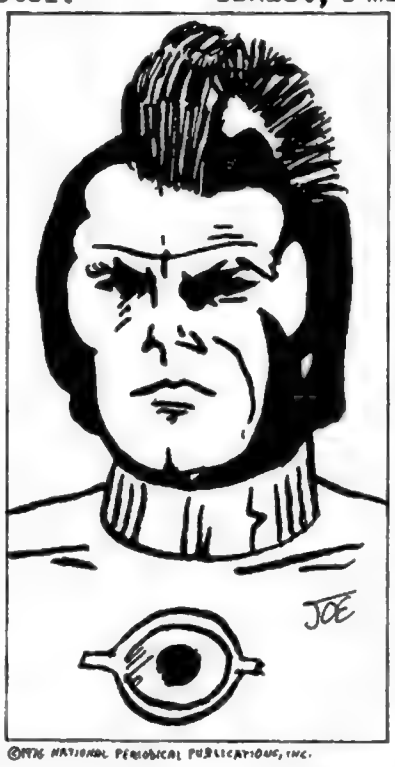
Just bought the latest Bem at the Regent Centre Hotel, and naturally it was great. That's not a word I happen to use a lot, but this time it's suitable -- and besides, it's always nice to get round an editor!

Saw you at the Comicon, and am kicking myself for not speaking to you. You were busy at the time, so I went round some other tables, and by the time I got back (an hour! Naturally I got engrossed with the comics...) you were nowhere in sight! Oh well, it's not a great disaster.

Who might get their series or one-shot? My own opinion is that Pip The Troll is inevitable--he's such a unique character, and in a way very much like the classic (and if anyone disagrees with that adjective, raspberry to the lot of them!) Howard the Duck. Anyway, he is too good a character to waste. Second, and don't laugh, Simon Stroud (from Morbius) should have a series--he looks pretty much like Blade, whom I happen to like. As I have a fondness for funny/serious characters, I think Zartros the Gnome is hilarious -- I've only seen him once so far, but he's marvelous. Also, The Homicidal Elf in Defenders should get his own mag, I mean Nova did! He could kill off Jack Kirby just like that; bang! (I hope, I hope; I'm sadistic...)

Seriously, if anyone has copies of Green Lantern/Green Arrow 76, 79, 80, 82-84, or 87 for sale, let me know, I'll pay a good price. And is it possible, Martin, for you to send me your comic list when you send a Bem?

-Martin Cohen.




GL 76, you want? I didn't know you were quite so wealthy, Martin! And now seems a good time for me to emphasize that I do not sell comics by post--it would take too much time, time I can't spare!

Dear Martin,

Comics are exciting, colourful; some of them are educational, if you can afford 'em! Comics do have a future; I think both DC and Marvel could continue to sell well. Personally, I'm a Marvelite --but I know a lot of fans collect both Marvel & DC, while of course artists and writers keep on moving from one company to the other, including of course Jack Kirby and Gerry Conway.

Stan Lee should start writing comics again. I hear that a Silver Surfer 50c book may come out next year, I hope that Kirby or John Buscema, or perhaps Trimpe, pencil it.

What about a Bem Annual this winter?

-Stephen Bailey.

The idea of some sort of special issue had crossed my mind--but the time it would take is the problem! Maybe next year...

Dear Martin,

Thank you for Bem 10. I apologise for taking so long to write, but I've been in Finland, leading a youth camp, and corrupting the youngsters with my revolutionary views.

But, now I'm back. So, Ms Glancy thinks I'm a radical. How nice, that's the biggest compliment I've yet received in the pages of your magazine. It's a shame, however, that she declines political argument--I was of the impression that we'd been engaged in such for some time now. But, having thus declined, she seems rather determined to have a firmly reactionary last word. In fact, were I a sexist, I might chauvinistically comment that she is typical of her gender. But I'm not, so I won't.

Flippancy apart, I must react to a few of Ms Glancy's comments. She believes in moderation in all things. That is a very sweeping statement, often employed by Liberal Party members with nothing better to say. It's a belief that can only be held by someone whose comfortable life breeds pure apathy. Moderation is often just not possible. Could the Bolsheviks have afforded to be moderate in 1917, or the Maoists in 1949, or, for that matter, the Americans in 1776? Radical change may on occasion be foolish, but such evaluation can only generally be made in hindsight. People now condemn the Allende government in Chile as having been foolish. But where were they before the counter-revolution?

Personally, I am highly suspicious of "moderate" Women's Libbers. They usually turn out to be women who want equal pay, but still expect their bloke to pay for everything; or, men who "allow" their wives to work, but still expect their socks washed. Although I would never claim that lesbians are the only liberated females, one can understand such groups arising. Complete separation is a trait of all liberation movements --"Black Power" being a prime example. However, as Ms Glancy quite rightly points out, the feminist movement is unique in that, in any long term, a separatist movement would run into reproductive difficulties.

In fact, I realise that the whole thing has strayed somewhat from the original -- you should award a no-prize to anyone who can remember what this has to do with comics. As Dean Smith remarks in his letter, holding radical sexual views is one thing, putting them into practise is another --people just won't let you. Seriously though, I don't share his particular problem as I'm not a parent, but I have worked a lot with kids. The only thing I can say is, be honest. To inform a child about something is not to agree with it. There's a very narrow line between being discrete and dishonest--if you wait, it may be too late.

-Pete Taylor.

O Mighty Emlock!

Little, surely, didst thou think that thou shouldst partake of the nectar of my ink so soon! Verily, are a fortnight has passed, Hunter the Mighty has seen fit to give you ramblings of cosmic import! Yea, tidings garnered from the misty realm of London hath divulged the proven truth that I, and one Andrew Johnson are giving (sic) birth to a fanzine!

"What!" Stormest thou. "Yet another rival for the Omnipotent Emlock, Lord of Bem?" And I say thee NAY! (And YEA!) For although, in truth, this fanzine is to be comics-oriented, 'tis to be unique among the annals of history! Ne'er before has any fanzine covered, in the depth we intend, to report and review, British and American undergrounds and their creators! Ne'er before has the cry rung out for articles on <u>any</u> aspect of comics -- for opinions on anything remotely connected to comics--all will be taken on their respective merits!

And, verily, I say to thee we shall have art from top British artists (including a nifty RED SONJA illo for our first issue cover, and ads, by Brian Bolland!) and articles from (hopefully) Rich Morrissey, yours truly, and others!

And, verily again, it shalt be throughout LITHO--20 (24?) pages long--and it shall be A4 --and it shall cost 25 pence--and it shall be out in January, if all goeth well!

I beseech thee, August One (yes, I know it's October!) to ask of persons--aid this valiant stroke of pure genius! Contribute!

I... "KA-THOOOM!"

But...what is this green monstrosity?

"Me HULK!"

Away, thou vile monster! What dost thou here?

"Me want EMLOCK! Then HULK SMASH!"

But...but why dost thou seek Bem's noble lord?

"HULK read latest issues of Bem! Hulk not see his comic reviewed by Edwoods! Punk Edwoods only man do reviews Hulk understands! Hulk SMASH editor of Bem for taking Edwoods off reviewing Hulk! Hulk SMASH dumb Emlock!"

Hold, monster, I say thee nay! I--

THOOM! THOOM! THOOM! THOOM! THOOM! THOOOOM!

...g-g-gee...those "thooms" really get to a guy, y'know...

-Hunter Tremayne.

Dear Martin,

It was quite a shock
To find that you, oh lovesome Lock
(Alliteration yet!) did not
Approve of Isis' rhymes. <u>I</u> thought
The methods of the newest star
Were really more convincing, far
Than doing magic in the manner
Of annataZ--oh damn, Zatanna
gniht fo tros siht can only lead
To eyestrain among all who read!

So you like Bizarro, Nige! I always thought he wasn't all he was cracked up to be. But don't feel bad about Jane -- I only know she's not really dead because I read the book ten years ago and happen to remember it, God knows why. I always feel sorry for poor old ERB. There he went to the trouble of creating a character who spoke many languages fluently, and what is the one thing everyone remembers about the fellow? "Me Tarzan -- you Jane"!

Some of those news items are simply mind-boggling. Strange Sports Stories, featuring Heroes & Heroines vs Villains & Villainess in a <u>baseball</u> game? Mixed baseball? <u>Luthor</u> playing baseball? Even Stranger Sports Story--Superman vs Ali. And more Marvel/DC team-ups to come. Where will it all end? After all the characters with similar powers have met (Aquaman and Sub-mariner fight over who's got the <u>real</u> Atlantis --Lori the Mermaid referees. Quicksilver and Flash run a race, while Barry tries without success to persuade Pietro to become well-adjusted. Green Arrow and Hawkeye have a contest--not archery, a sarcasm contest. They only start to <u>fight</u> when Hawkeye makes a pass at Black Canary.) they'll have to move into the really bizarre, like Hulk and Brainiac 5 (they both have green skin), and Thor and Supergirl (they both have long blonde hair). Hercules meets Hercules. Captain Marvel meets Captain Marvel...

Someone should write a thesis on why there is usually a helpless blonde on Conan covers. The latest example, #67, is more than usually silly as the lady in question, Tara, is shown on the cover as slender-waisted, de-freckled, and in a situation she never gets into inside, where she is actually about three weeks away from unmarried motherhood, from the look of her. Red Sonja guests, too I <u>nearly</u> chose her, Pete April. I have this dream that someday, somehow, she'll go to Gor, and she'll meet Tarl Cabot, and boy, will she kick him in his...I'm sorry, I get these violent fits whenever I think of John Norman, the man who should be castrated with a blunt spoon. I shall stop thinking about him, and get back to inventing strange team-ups. The Silver Surfer meets Bizarro...

-Kathleen Glancy.

# COMIC MART

# LIVERPOOL 8.1.77

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T.V. EPISODES, STARTING AT 4.00p.m.

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LISTS



—ADVERTISEMENT—

Or Mary Whitehouse meets Linda Lovelace? Martin Lock meets four girls and--//sorry Nige, we're short of space again. Hunter Tremayne's address (for his fanzine project)

and "Fermodyl" is a brand of hairspray, okay?

Dear Martin and the Bem crew,

You have Gary Fox to thank for this LoC. I was ordering comics from FANTASY UNLIMITED, and asked if your BEM was worth getting (see how stupid I was). Gary replied saying that he and the FU crew recommended it, and enclosed a free copy of Bem ≠10, saying you might like a LoC.

Well, I enjoyed your fanzine immensely. Now my opinion on the contents. The cover was great, with really clear cover repros. Of the news, the most saddening (to me) item was Englehart leaving Marvel. I hear that Conway got both Englehart taken off Avengers and Gerber taken off Defenders. Taking Englehart off Avengers is like letting Kirby do Warlock! RAMPAGING HULK sounds interesting, but I wish Herb Trimpe would pencil and ink it, because he is Hulk's best artist. Kirby's doing BLACK PANTHER, eh? Goodbye, McGregor characterisation. Goodbye, true-to-life hero. You might rest in peace, T'Challa, but Kirby won't let you! Why couldn't he stay at DC, where fans liked him? Sales, I hear. At Marvel, fans just don't appreciate 30s & 40s style stories--plot but no good dialogue. His pencils are good, but why can't anyone ink him well? Except for CAPTAIN AMERICA ≠193's cover, inked by Romita, and John Verpoorten's work on ETERNALS, no-one has done him justice.

The Page 4 Funnies were fine. I have a few strip ideas of my own, but what should one use to draw them with so that they can get printed? Reg Uspatoff & Rich Morrissey were both good, while Ruan Lanihorne's Distribution News was a collection-saver--thanks to Mr Cole too. Do you know who distributes Marvel's b & w books, and why don't we get every Marvel title?

Fan-Things too was helpful, but one shop he mentions are anything <u>but</u> cheap. Anyone who wants really cheap imports, write, saying you want his latest list, to Peter Duxbury, at 21 Spreadbury St, Manchester M10 9DR, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Tell him I sent you! He also does DC, Warren, Charlton, & Marvel All-Colour comics, plus some fanzines.

The Marble Checklist, in the tradition of Not Brand Echh, was a winner, I'd like to see it in every Bem. The best were Hostess Twinkies ≠1 & Marvel Swindle ≠97; Nige, tell Alan Austin to continue "Blackmail by Nasty Nige", as in CU ≠38, or I'll sic my trained tapir on him! The reviews were thought-provoking, and Reaction & "The Bem Story" were good too. But was "The Bem Story" a cover-up for a back-issue ad?

-Ken Moore.

Perish forbid! Anyway, Marvel's black & whites are distributed by Gold's, the Classics Comics & Treasuries by Condé Nast, and the regular 10p comics by World Distributors, who feel that 25 titles a month are quite enough to distribute. Including Hulk, Spider-Man, etc would lead to confusion with the Marvel Weeklies, apparently. For "Page 4 Funnies", use white paper, black ink, a strip width of 7.6" -- and don't forget to enclose return postage. Good luck!

Dear Martin,

I was expecting Bem ≠10 a couple of weeks later to craftily co-incide with the con but thanks for a welcome surprise. The larger size cover repros certainly make more sense than those tiny action paintings on page 3. Wes Smith inks well, but draws hands about as well as I do. And Philip Elliott's drawings look good, but why does he sign himself "SID"?

I'm not too convinced about these DC/Marvel co-productions. Both the Marvel Earth and DC's Earth-1 are over-populated with super-people, and to suggest that they all share the same planet and, aside from Superman/Spider-Man, manage to avoid contact with any representatives of the other company is...well, comical. Since the publishers seem to have reached a stalemate in selecting the next team-up co-stars, it has occurred to me that the JLA/JSA anniversary issues must be looking for new ideas. A JLA-JSA-Marvel story, perhaps involving two books with a reasonable number of panels per page, would be an idea worth toying with.

I can understand Ms Khan wishing to go with Wonder Woman though, casting for old-time fans, the female vote, and the video-hordes, all in one net. Since Marvel are finally producing imaginary stories, it's obvious that these things fall under that classification...it's not the same, though.

Before I get too carried away, to answer Keith Williams' question in Bemletter, the star on the underpants was simply a load of symbolics. Lastly, I feel I've not been bitchy enough this time so, why does Leslie Stannage (page 2) ink his drawings with a Brillo pad?

Yours with Great Sincerity,

-Christopher K. Ash.

I don't know, but you should see what he scours his saucepans with! Your Leslie Stannage dart-board will reach you in the mail soon. -Nige.

Dear Martin,

Captain Nuts so far. Suddenly, in the back of Bem ≠7, in four dark panels (and credits to boot), came the beginnings of confusion.

In that particular episode, Beefstock was mysteriously changed, by the full moon, into a werewolf (or even a werestock?). If you look carefully, you'll see that the normally placid Beefstock is letting loose strings of 'R's, and by the last panel has his own raincloud! I thought that the tag-line would also help to indicate this change.

Perhaps knowledge of this lycanthropic change makes the consequent episodes more "coherent" (especially Bem ≠8)--I hope so.

-Mark Bryant.

Malcolm! I warned you not to let Mark get hold of anything sharp, like a typewriter! Now he's let the cat out of the bag -- "coherent"? And we'd got people thinking it was funny...

Dear George and Gray,

Hi! This am Superswipe writing at you, yes indeed! It am come to my attention that dumb readers-people am confused about Captain--er, Nuts? Be it am known that Nutsy first appeared (under the title "Charlie Marvel") on the back cover of DAILY STAR ≠1, and was totally the work of Gregorius Chown. His second appearance am in UGG-ROTTEN COMIX ≠1, and am by me and am called "Captain Nuts", as am his Bem debut in ≠6. In Bem-7, Bryant & Lomax start doing the heavy work, though dumb editor keep an eye on us--him called Dez or something, me think?

Hoping this am finding you, as am jolly damn sure that it am leaving me! Hello to all!

Sue Perswipe, Little Trooth

I knew it! That Chown fella sure has a lot to answer for! I hope I got the name right, the signature wasn't very clear...

Dear Nige and Jack,

Okay, so maybe the "Hypey Marble Check-list" was funny, and maybe I actually did laugh a couple of times, but if you so much as mention Don McGregor--he's God, by the way -- or Jungle Action, or even Killraven again, I'll moider the pair of ya! Okay?

-Nazer Alikhan.

Try it, punk! We've been threatened by experts!

And on that uplifting note, another lettercol grinds to a halt. There'll be another one next time, of course--would you like to join in?

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MARVEL ALL-COLOUR COMICS DISTRIBUTION -- "RE-ENTER THE COUNT" -- compiled by Ruan Lanihorne

| november | december | january | february | march 1977 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daredevil 139→ | | | | |
| ▬Invaders 10→ | | | | |
| ▬Marvel Two-In-One 21→ | | | | |
| ○Captain America 203→ | | | | |
| ○Thor 253→ | | | | |
| ▬Master of Kung Fu 46→ | | | | |
| ▬Eternals 5→ | | | | |
| Power Man 37→ | | | | |
| ▬Conan 68→ | | | | |
| Defenders 41→ | | | | |
| ▬Nova 3→ | | | | |
| Marvel Team-Up 51→ | | | | |
| Iron Man 92→ | | | | |
| ▬Howard the Duck 6→ | | | | |
| ▬Avengers 153→ | | | | |
| ▬Skull 8 | ▬2001 1→ | | | |
| Tomb of Darkness 23 | ▬Fantastic Four 177→ | | | |
| M Triple Action 32 | Champions 9→ | | | |
| ▬Marvel Feature 7 | ▬Peter Parker 1 | ▬Logan's Run 1→ | | |
| Chamber of Chills 25 | ▬Kull 18 | ▬Ms Marvel 1→ | | |
| Black Goliath 5 | ▬Dr Strange 20 | ▬Tomb of Dracula 52→ | | |
| ▬Omega 5 | ▬M Spotlight 31 | Omega 6 | Dr Strange 21 | Omega 7 |
| ▬Captain Marvel 47 | Inhumans 8 | ▬Black Panther 1 | Inhumans 9 | Black Panther 2 |
| ▬Amazing Adventures 39 | M Presents 8 | Captain Marvel 48 | M Presents 9 | Captain Marvel 49 |
| ▬Werewolf by Night 41 | M Premiere 33 | ▬Red Sonja 1 | (?) | (?) Red Sonja |
| ▬Warlock 15 | S-V Team-Up 9 | | | |
| ▬Marvel Presents 7 | | | | |

You'll notice a few changes from last issue's chart, now--some October Marvel comics were delayed a month, which threw World's calculations out so that only 22 October titles were distributed at 10p. To make up for this, though, November will see 27 titles, as the delayed WARLOCK ≠15 and MARVEL PRESENTS ≠7 are added to the list...and it's confirmed that it's only one issue of FANTASTIC FOUR that we'll miss, so there'll be 26 titles in December! The swift return of FF was due to them losing the "front spot" in the weekly THE TITANS, to go into the back of the new CAPTAIN BRITAIN; and the demise of the DRACULA LIVES weekly means at last that TOMB OF DRACULA seems certain to return, replacing PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, which is only coming over for the one issue--it was belatedly realised that the book was going to feature Spider-Man, and his solo books aren't imported, in case they compete with the British Weekly. As PRISONER has been cancelled before it could start, this leaves a spare "slot" from February on, hopefully for RED SONJA in odd months--but in even months it could be KULL, SPOTLIGHT, PREMIERE, or SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP. Only time will tell! -RL

# TALE-ENDERS

For both Marvel and DC, the month is December --so let's get this specially-extended Emlock column on the road, shall we? And where better to start than with those Dynamic Characters at 75 Rockefeller Plaza, who are unleashing on a waiting world another far-out first issue--the long-awaited debut, on a quarterly schedule, of...er, hang on a sec...ah yes, SUPER-HEROES BATTLE SUPER-GORILLAS, a 50-cent concoction of a Boring Superman tale ("The Super-Gorilla From Krypton") from 1958, a Tedious Batman story ("The Gorilla Boss of Gotham City") from 1952, and a Wearisome piece ("Grodd Puts the Squeeze on Flash") from 1967. Surely you've heard of Bob Tedious and Carmine Wearisome? They're as famous as a book of gorilla reprints is a good idea. What ARE our DC chums up to?

Still in the 50-cent size, there's DC SUPER-STARS ≠10, in which a <u>fourth</u> attempt is made to get the "Strange Sports Stories" concept off the ground, this time using super-heroes (were the super-gorillas too busy that day?); there's a 10-page Green Lantern reprint and an SF 6-pager from the mid-fifties in the back, while a new 18-pager features a baseball game between heroes and villains. To the list in Bem-10, add Amazo, who like Uncle Sam is an umpire; and shift the Huntress to the goodies! But don't ask for a synopsis of the plot, as it defies any sort of analysis! You might just as well read WORLD'S FINEST ≠242, apparently the final Super Sons sago. Promises, promises!

Let's try some good comics. SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES ≠222 (I checked -- this is the first issue with the new title. It was, in case you've forgotten, Superboy STARRING the LSH before) has two stories. The lead 11-pager has a routine Bates script, and some nice Mike Grell/Bob Wiacek art; in the back-up spot is a Shooter-scripted tale, not enhanced by the art, which is by Mike Nasser & Bob Layton. In one or two places, the Continuity influence is strong, but some bits are really poor. Is this the shape of LSH art to come? I hope not...

RAGMAN ≠3, by Kanigher, Kubert, & the Redondo Studio, is pretty good--I prefer the approach that OMEGA has to life in the decaying heart of an American city, but that's a personal preference; Ragman's a good magazine--while it lasts. BRAVE & BOLD ≠131 gives us, co-starring with Batsy, a Jim Aparo version of the Amazing Amazon, alias Wonder Woman; Bob Haney's guest baddy is a rather boring Catwoman. Ordinary...

HERCULES UNBOUND ≠8, drawn by "Walt & Woody" as they sign the cover, and written by David Michelinie, has slightly more Simonson visible than last time--and the same can be said of Mr M's script. It's a new direction for the book, and it looks plenty intriguing. Simonson solo can be found on METAL MEN ≠49; he even, along with scripter Martin "Pesky" Pasko, co-plotted "The Dark God Cometh", the conclusion of the Eclipso saga--and of Walt's stay on the title. All nice stuff--catch it while it lasts! Back to Grell, and his one-man show, WARLORD ≠4; a splendid job, even if "Iron Mike" doesn't get his anatomy right in some panels--Skartaris is a fascinating place to visit!

KAMANDI ≠48 has the last boy on Earth back on a bi-monthly schedule, with Dick Ayers on art--but pretty well swamped by inkers Chua & Alcala. JLA ≠137 concludes the annual reunion with the JSA, along with the Fawcett heroes--the cover features a clash between Superman & Captain Marvel, need I mention that Bridwell & Pasko cop out on it inside? GREEN LANTERN ≠92 is by O'Neil, Grell & inker Robert Smith--it's the last one for a while to co-star GA, and, as an adventure tale, is good; Sinestro, GL, & GA have to work together, would you believe, to escape from a Robin Hood-type alien world? Sinestro having to pretend to be a jester is fun--his revenge for that indignity isn't long in coming, however!

As a last DC, ACTION ≠466 has an excellent cover by Neal Adams -- and the full-length (if 17 pages justifies that description) conclusion of Luthor's latest bid to destroy Supes isn't bad, either; all kudos to Bates, Swan & Oksner for an engrossing serial.

Meanwhile, have Marvel been idle? Of course not! Their answer to Super-Heroes Battle Super-Gorillas also premieres this month--it's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY ≠1, in which Jack Kirby manages to give us a 17-page new version of the first and final segments of the film. So the film's apes weren't the only ones to be influenced by the monolith, and Bowman won't be the only man to take the weird, timeless trip to rebirth--this could be an excellent book... better than ETERNALS, which has now reached ≠6, and relies too much on awesome events still to come. The book is now tied into the regular Marvel Universe, with references to the FF and Nick Fury -- not a good move. Talking of that well-known Agent of SHIELD brings us neatly to MARVEL SPOTLIGHT ≠31, starring Fury in "The Infinity Formula", written by Jim Starlin and drawn by Howard Chaykin. It's an excellent tale--it does more for its star's character than 100 issues of Sgt Fury! When it comes out in late November, BUY it, you goldbricks! You want to keep 10p in your pockets forever?

HOWARD THE DUCK ≠7 is a joy and a delight, from Gerber, Colan, and Leialoha. The first five pages get rid of the "Cookie Creature" plot--the second chapter, "Get Down America", charts Howard's rise from security guard at the All-Night Party convention to presidential candidate, and is excellent--if Bev is drafted as vice president, I'll vote their ticket, you bet!

DOC SAVAGE ≠6, theoretically dated October, has finally arrived, with the 48-page Moench & DeZuniga supersaga "The Sky Stealers". Doug's "scientific" explanation of how the villains can suffocate an entire town is a bit shaky, and the proof-reading is poor--but it's still an excellent book. As is, of course, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN ≠16, with the 25-page "People of the Black Circle" by Thomas, Buscema, and Alcala, a 6-page instalment of Roy's adaptation of "The Hyborian Age" drawn by Walt Simonson, and Bran Mak Morn in the 15-page "Worms of the Earth", by Thomas, Barry Smith, and Tim Conrad, who pencilled the last few pages and inked the lot. Add the usual features, and it's another superior package--but why is page 40 the last page of the Ape article belonging to PotA 27? Not that PLANET OF THE APES ≠27 is missing the page--and it's also got a "Terror on the PotA" episode by Moench & Trimpe, and the penultimate part of "Battle" by Moench & Virgil Redondo. And MARVEL PREVIEW ≠8 features, under the "Legion of Monsters" heading, a Blade 6-pager by Marv Wolfman & Gene Colan, a 21-page Morbius story by Moench & Trinidad, a McGregor/Ploog swamp story (11 pages), and the 10-page "Curse of Anubis" by Russ Jones, John Warner, & Mayerik. If this is the sort of stuff lost in the Marvel inventory by the collapse of their horror b & w line, then the sooner they have a regular zine to publish it in the better!

But, back to the 30-cent size. AVENGERS ≠154 (Conway/Perez/Marcos) starts a 5-parter with such neighbourly folks as Attuma, Doc Doom, and Prince Namor, which continues in SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP ≠9 (Mantlo/Shooter/Trapani), and is pretty promising; FANTASTIC FOUR ≠177 (Thomas/Perez/Sinnott) has the Frightful Four back to full strength with a new member--who is also, in a way, a member of the original FF. "Look Out For the Frightful Four" is the title, which makes Impossible Man enquire "Why? Can't they look out for themselves?"

Moving right along now, KULL ≠18, with a cover more reminiscent of Thongor, is by Moench, Hannigan, & Alcala, and is up to the title's high standards; MARVEL TEAM-UP ≠52 (Conway/Sal Buscema/Esposito) with Captain America as guest star shows that, for all his faults, Gerard F. Conway can get Marvel's continuity sorted out --and not just to link the book to his newest book. Which is, of course, PETER SPECTACULAR THE SPIDER PARKER-MAN (or similar) ≠1, Marvel's attempt to give Spidophiles twice as much of their hero per month, Peter Parker twice the hang-ups, and British Marvel twice as much new material to use. Everybody's happy, right?

So, let's finish with the Warren magazines, to keep comicdom's sophisticates happy -- but what can one say about SPIRIT ≠16 (Oct), with eight 7-page classics? Just if you've never sampled Will Eisner's creation, dash off to your favourite rip-off artist -- oops, I mean dealer--and promptly purchase one! VAMPIRELLA ≠55 has a new colour 8-pager, and reprints of stories from Vampis 15, 16, & 13, all drawn by Gonzalez and all featuring the Lady herself; and EERIE ≠78 features a less glamorous star, one Jerome Curry, alias the Mummy, in reprints of his Warren wanderings, drawn by one Jaime Brocal and written by Steve Skeates. Add "Hope of the Future" by Doug Moench and Brocal, Joe Brancatelli's column on comic books, 17 pages of merchandising, a cover and frontispiece got by blowing-up panels from the stories, and you have got a $1.50 package. But why have Eerie & Vampi got 8 pages of full colour on top of 72 of black and white for $1.50, when The Spirit hasn't? Oh well, that's comics business! -ML

# THE LADY IS LETHAL!

OUR CIMMERIAN CORRESPONDENT, HUNTER TREMAYNE, RETURNS WITH AN APPRAISAL OF RED SONJA

Red Sonja! A Robert E. Howard creation whose spirit, if not description, was adapted to comic book form by (initially) Roy Thomas and Barry Smith. Her introduction into the Conan canon would seem to be in the guise of a female equivalent; a brawling, boozing, sword-swinging red-maned goddess heaven-made for the dark god's deadliest son.

Sonja, however, was not born in the midst of a battlefield during a raid by the Vanir, but on a farm, where she, along with two brothers, lived with her parents. She only received her baptism of blood (excuse the necessary clichés) after she had been raped, and the rest of her family slaughtered, by the enigmatically-named "nameless one". Despairing and alone, and mad with the desire for revenge, she was visited by a "vision" (presumably a valkyrie, or some such) and told that she had awakened in herself strength which had been lying dormant. If she would vow, said the vision, that she would let herself be loved by no man "except he that hath defeated you in fair battle", then that strength should be hers. Sonja, half crazed for revenge, so vowed.

And what a vow.

To any woman (or, necessarily, man) who looks once, Sonja is the epitome of liberated womanhood. Imagine! A woman swinging a sword with the best of 'em! But the burden she placed upon herself that day (or night) weighs heavy, a terrible, nagging millstone around her heart. For how can any person be liberated, who cannot afford to love? And therein lies Red Sonja's version of the burden that all super-powered heroes or heroines have to accept as part of the "job". Sonja appears natural, indeed the epitome of same, but she is magical (at least to a degree) -- that is her strength, and also her weakness.

Her premise is that of an adventurer for gain; a female adventurer. Running away from everyone, even Conan, who she thinks she might love--if she could let herself. She rides and fights alone not from preference, but out of necessity. She is afraid, afraid of herself and afraid of men. She has no ultimate goal, beyond the morning. Her quest for revenge was resolved in KULL AND THE BARBARIANS #3, and there is nothing left, emotionally, except her dry, bitter humour. She is a lost soul, even more, perhaps, than is Dracula. He, at least, never had a choice. Revenge? Hah! What will you do for an encore?

And now, a few lines concerning Red Sonja's artists. Started by Barry Smith at his peak, continued by John Buscema, Neal Adams, the Tribe, Chaykin, Giordano, and now Thorne, Sonja has run the gamut from a well-proportioned warrior-woman to a frail girl and back again.

Frank Thorne (her current artist), is perhaps the best she has had, but he, like Nino and Robbins, is an "acquired taste" -- you either love 'im or loath 'im. I love his art, but then, that's me. He draws her hair and face and body so that you don't mind the lack of backgrounds.

Roy Thomas is, I hear, going to take over from Bruce Jones, who has been doing plain fill-ins on script for half-a-dozen issues or so now. While a good, steady writer, with the gift of the gab--for example, in Marvel Feature #2 Red Sonja, battling picts, comments "As a certain Cimmerian friend of mine used to say... the only thing better than a dead pict...is two dead picts...or three...or four..." --Roy Thomas can script and plot with equal skill, so perhaps he might take her somewhere positive. She's not as frameworked as Conan, so he should find the job harder, if more enjoyable, than, say, Kull. I wish him all the luck in the world with this wild, fearless warrior woman, who, while viciously beautiful and proudly independent, ironically enough <u>needs</u> a man.

Something has to blow.

-HT